

# Statewide Agencies Propose Funding Cuts & Elimination of Services Affecting Thousands of the State's Disabled Individuals

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Learn more about the **Housing & Essential Needs** and the **Aged, Blind & Disabled** programs at our website:  
[wliha.org/advocacy/state#HEN](http://wliha.org/advocacy/state#HEN)

Overview of the **DSHS budget proposal**: [www.dshs.wa.gov/budget/esa.shtml](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/budget/esa.shtml)

DSHS explaining how people qualifying for ABD would be moved to HEN once ABD is eliminated:  
[www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/budget/2015-17Biennial/StackDPs/ESA\\_ABD.pdf](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/budget/2015-17Biennial/StackDPs/ESA_ABD.pdf)

Overview of the **Commerce budget proposal**:  
[www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2015-17%20Biennial%20Operating%20Budget%20Book%209-18-14.pdf](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2015-17%20Biennial%20Operating%20Budget%20Book%209-18-14.pdf)

**Income & Poverty in the United States: 2013**:  
[www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf](http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf)

A version of this release can be found at: [wliha.org/press](http://wliha.org/press).

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In recent budget proposals released by state agencies to the Governor's Office, three programs that help thousands of disabled individuals across the state are slated to receive substantial cuts.

The state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) released a budget document proposing to eliminate the **Aged, Blind & Disabled (ABD) program**. ABD, an outgrowth of the former Disability Lifeline program, helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental or physical disabilities with \$197 per month, while they are applying to the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This application process can take many years. This is why DSHS also provides SSI Facilitation services to assist disabled individuals through the lengthy process of applying for federal SSI benefits. **DSHS has proposed that both ABD and SSI Facilitation services be eliminated, effective July 1, 2015.**

DSHS also recommends that once ABD is eliminated, people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness who would have otherwise qualified for ABD should be allowed to apply for the **Housing & Essential Needs (HEN) program**. Administered by the Department of Commerce, HEN ensures that people with temporary mental or physical disabilities can access stable housing when facing extreme economic hardship. Recipients are also able to access essential basic needs, including transportation assistance and health/hygiene items.

This will expand the HEN-eligible population from 7,303 per month to 30,702.

However, Commerce has submitted a department proposal to cut the HEN program by \$7.4 million (out of the \$59 million allocation), which is a 13.1% cut. According to Commerce's calculations, they could only serve a fraction of the ABD recipients who would be newly eligible for HEN. This would leave thousands of disabled adults who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, without housing assistance. Commerce itself bleakly noted the impact of HEN cuts on existing HEN recipients, (not including the added ABD caseload) on pg. 298 of the Department of Commerce 2015-17 Operating Budget: "If this proposal is adopted approximately 580 additional people will be living unsheltered. Some of these 580 unserved people may become hospitalized and some may die of exposure."

According to **Housing Alliance Executive Director Rachael Myers**, these cuts come at a terrible time, "These services literally mean the difference between living in a home or on the street. We've been making progress on reducing the number of people living without shelter. But this year, that number increased. Instead of reducing programs that keep people off the streets, we should be expanding those services. If our current tax structure is inadequate to meet the basic needs of the people in our state, we should fix that by closing corporate tax loopholes and increasing revenue, not by making more people homeless."

Reducing these services comes just after the U.S. Census released American Community Survey numbers showing **Washington was one of only three states that saw an increase of people living in poverty from 2012 to 2013**. That's a jump to 970,000 vulnerable residents who could be impacted by eliminating these programs. **The January 2014 Point in Time count of people experiencing homelessness found 18,839 people without a stable, permanent home. ###**